



June 15, 2011

Federal Communications Commission
c/o Marlene Dortch, Secretary
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20554

WT 11-65: In the Matter of applications of AT&T Inc. and Deutsche Telekom AG for consent to assign or Transfer Control of licenses and Authorizations

Dear Chairman Genachowski and Commissioners:

More than 80 years ago, the vast majority of rural communities did not have electrical service, and consequently the economic opportunities for those areas were severely limited. The absence of electricity threatened to drive economic growth away from rural areas and create a permanent divide in America. Fortunately, infrastructure expansion made electricity accessible throughout America's countryside, and that infrastructure expansion removed barriers between the "have's" and "have not's."

As rural electrification was critical in the last century, today's economy requires Internet access to thrive. Rural business owners—including farmers and ranchers—increasingly rely upon wireless broadband for their daily work. Communities without effective, high-quality wireless broadband are less likely to succeed in an ever more global economy. Steps should be taken to expand broadband technology to underserved areas so that business opportunities remain viable in rural America. Access to the latest wireless technology is essential to our modern economy.

Recently, AT&T announced plans to merge with T-Mobile. AT&T indicated that as an outcome of the merger, over 300 million Americans will gain access to 4G wireless service. In Iowa, 1.4 million additional people will gain coverage. If those claims are accurate, this could be a very positive development for Iowa's internet users.

Iowa Farm Bureau supports efforts to expand wireless broadband throughout the country, particularly in rural communities. Our members seek rural internet service through a fairly priced, competitive telecommunications marketplace. Therefore, Iowa Farm Bureau encourages careful and thoughtful review of the proposed AT&T and T-Mobile merger.

Sincerely,

Trudy Wastweet
National Policy Advisor